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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussions with [redacted] on MKNAOMI

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1. On 30 June I met with [redacted] in my office to discuss with him his knowledge of the MKNAOMI project. [redacted] entered on duty with the Agency in October 1967 and served as Chief of the Chemistry Branch from March 1969 to April 1970. Also present during the interview were [redacted] OGC, [redacted] ORD, and [redacted] of OTS.

2. I informed [redacted] that whatever information he could give us about the project he should do so voluntarily, and that he was under no compulsion to provide any information he chose not to.

3. Sometime was spent giving [redacted] an understanding of what we knew about Project MKNAOMI and outlining the principal gaps in our knowledge. The nature of the project and its stated purpose of maintaining biological agents and delivery systems in a state of readiness for operational use, when juxtaposed with the current allegations about assassination plots, obviously caused great concern within the Agency. We wished to get a better understanding of precisely how the project was used and to determine whether or not it had in fact provided direct operational support. The discovery of a substantial amount of shellfish toxin in storage in OTS had created an additional problem. We could not ascertain from whence it came, or whether or not it was included in an inventory of materials held for the Agency by Fort Detrick which we presumed had been destroyed.

4. Dr. [redacted] said that he was prepared to help in any way he could and would provide whatever information he had. He stated at the outset that during his period in OTS the project had for all intents and purposes been dormant. Virtually nothing was going on with the project at the time of his first exposure to it, and indeed his first reaction had been one of surprise that the Agency was acting so conservatively in this area.

5. The matter of the inventory of Agency material held by Fort Detrick came up immediately. [redacted] was shown the unsigned letter to the Director requesting guidance as to the disposal of reserve stocks. He identified the date of that memo of 18 February 1970 as being in his handwriting. He did not recall whether the memo was actually signed. He did indicate that several months later he was told by [redacted] the Chief of TSD, to personally go to Fort Detrick and inform the Army that whatever materials they had of ours should be considered theirs to be destroyed or kept as the Army wished. It is his understanding that that material was in fact destroyed. In response to a query about the shellfish toxin, [redacted] stated that that material had in fact been called back from Fort Detrick and was

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stored on the basis of his own decision which resulted from conversations with [redacted]. It was their belief that the cost and difficulty of isolating the toxin were so great that it simply made no sense to have it destroyed. He pointed out that [redacted] of Fort Detrick had worked for over ten years in developing the process whereby the toxin could be prepared in pure form. It was simply their "arbitrary" decision that it should not be left for destruction. Apparently no one, including [redacted], was told of this decision or the fact that the material had been returned to OTS. As Dr. [redacted] recalled, this took place prior to his being told by [redacted] to inform Fort Detrick that destruction of the material on the inventory list could occur. Though toxins were not originally included in the Presidential Order for BW materials destruction, the DOD subsequently did so include it. [redacted] stated that he probably should have taken steps at that time to see that it was destroyed. [redacted] was present during this discussion and took no issue with [redacted] account. Neither could recall precisely how the material was delivered to OTS but agreed that only three possibilities existed: it was brought back by either [redacted] or by [redacted] or delivered by someone from Fort Detrick. The latter possibility was considered to be the most likely. [redacted] was certain that the shellfish toxin in storage in OTS is the same toxin as that listed on the inventory. No resolution as to the discrepancy between the amounts could be found. [redacted] reported that a recalculation of the amounts in storage based upon labels showed that 11.4 grams are actually on hand. Since it is in several different forms and complete reliance is placed upon labeling, however, no real discrepancy may actually exist.

6. In response to a question as to the servicing of operational requirements, [redacted] stated categorically that he had never received an operational requirement for MKNAOMI materials during his tenure in OTS. The most he ever received in that vein were questions as to the state of the art in terms of what might be possible. He apparently had to respond frequently in a negative way to questions about the availability of instantaneous incapacitants. A principal interest in such a capability was expressed both by Agency personnel and Army Special Forces in relation to a desire to knock out a Viet Cong leader before he could render himself unable to talk. No such capability existed, nor was the development of such a capability in the near term foreseeable.

7. In discussing the way in which the project was managed, [redacted] generally confirmed earlier information on the subject. Virtually no written records were generated. Indeed he stated that during his association with the project he had never seen an operational file on the project. Funding generally supported SOD's operations without close accounting on a tasking basis. During his period, the program pursued by SOD was almost entirely one of its own making. He stated that his role was essentially one of keeping track of what was going on. Moreover, he pointed out that he had no mandate from [redacted] to initiate any new efforts within the project. He made it clear that the requirements of the Army Special Forces were the driving force defining SOD activities. He stated that Special Forces' interest included a number of weird things, definitely among which was assassination. He also stated, however, that there was no way in the world that such an interest could be documented. SOD's program centered on or about "the big

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five". This term referred to five special delivery systems for BW agents which were being developed for specific use by Special Forces. Included among these was the micro projectile project -- which appears to be identical to the micro-bio-innoculator -- in which so much Agency interest was shown. Neither [redacted] nor [redacted] could remember what the other four delivery systems were. Special Agency interest had been shown toward soluble projectiles primarily as a means for introducing larger amounts of incapacitants into the body and in dog incapacitating systems. The latter were apparently actually tested on the guard dogs maintained in earlier times at Isolation. The use of Nalline as an antidote had proved very effective so that the dogs completely recovered in about five minutes after its administration. Nearly all of this work had been started and reached its high point before [redacted] time.

8. In general, [redacted] characterized his experience with the project as having been very uneventful, continuously diminishing in level, and not at all of major interest or significance.

9. In summary, I found the discussion with [redacted] helpful and entirely believable. He has, I think, cleared up the question as to how we became the unwitting possessor of our shellfish toxin store. He stated that it was handled with extreme care always. Undoubtedly it was simply transferred from one freezer to another and in his view continually kept under adequate control. [redacted] was certain that nothing had been done with it subsequent to its delivery during the time he remained with the Agency. [redacted] has given assurances that it was untouched subsequent to that. [redacted] account of the winding down of MKNAOMI is consistent with our records.

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